

**Veterans Services Foundation  
Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
December 6, 2006**

A meeting of the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) was held on Wednesday, December 6, 2006 at the American Legion Department of Virginia Building in Richmond.

**Members Present:**

Vincent Burgess, Supriya Christopher, Lydia Dudley, Paul Galanti, Leroy Gross, John Hanson, Frederic Leigh, Frank Louthan, Jr., and Ray Smoot

**Members Absent:**

Margaret Eure

**Others Present:**

Mason Botts, Chair, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Services Organizations; Roger Sullivan, Virginia Veterans Coalition; Tom Briggs, Virginia Veterans Coalition

**Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present:**

Bert Boyd, DVS Chief Operations Officer, Steven Combs, DVS Director of Policy and Planning; Anne Atkins, DVS Director of Communications; Lew Deal, DVS Deputy Director of Outreach; Armistead Ransone, DVS Director of Administration and Finance; Dan Kemano, DVS Cemetery Administrator; Bill Van Thiel, DVS Care Center Administrator; Roz Trent, DVS Deputy Director of Board Operations and Don Ferguson, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General

**Materials Distributed:**

Meeting Agenda; Draft Minutes of July 26, 2006 meeting; DVS Initiatives in Support of Executive Order 19 and Improving Service to Virginia Veterans document; Veterans Services Fund Quarterly Update; DVS Revised Policies: VVCC Resident's Assistance Fund & Cemetery Donation Fund; Veterans Services Foundation Needs Assessment

**Opening and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Dudley welcomed everyone and called the meeting of the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees to order at 11:10 a.m. The members recited the pledge of allegiance to the American flag.

**Roll Call of Members and Quorum Determination**

The roll was called and a quorum of nine of ten members was recorded as present.

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the July 26 meeting were reviewed. John Hanson made a motion that the minutes be approved as written. Leroy Gross seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Comments from Chairs**

Chairman Dudley acknowledged and thanked outgoing Chairman John Hanson for his hard work and dedication to the Foundation while serving as Chairman from July 2003 – July 2006.

Chairman of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) Paul Galanti, briefed the VSF on activities of the BVS. In particular, he stated that the BVS is gearing up for the upcoming 2007 General Assembly session, and is heavily involved with major initiatives associated with Executive Order 19.

Chairman of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) Mason Botts briefed the VSF on activities of the JLC. In particular, he informed the VSF of the JLC had developed its 2007 legislative agenda which included nine legislative priorities. He stated that Pay Day Lending was #6 on the priority listing and stated that JLC Vice-Chairman Sam Wilder testified at the December 5, 2006 House Commerce and Labor Committee hearing on Pay Day Lending. Pay Day Lending is #6 priority listed on the JLC 2006 legislative agenda.

Chairman Dudley paused to introduce Roger Sullivan and Tom Briggs of the Virginia Veterans Coalition.

### **Commissioner's Update**

Commissioner Burgess reported as follows:

- Initiatives in Support of EO 19 – The DVS has identified three primary initiatives needed to address the issues and improve services to veterans and their families: Development of an Internet portal, workforce development and increased outreach.
- Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) Audit - Of the ten (13) DVS findings cited in the APA Report submitted in the summer 2006, 9 areas have been addressed; 3 will be addressed by the end of 2006; and 1 will be addressed next fiscal year. The VSF will be provided a copy of the APA Report.
- Studies:

DVS has submitted a Request for Proposal to establish a contract for conducting a Future Veterans Cemetery Study to examine the need for and cost of additional veterans cemeteries in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The scope of the study shall encompass Virginia's state-owned veterans cemeteries and national veterans cemeteries that currently exist in or may be constructed in the Commonwealth of Virginia. A report of this study is due to the General Assembly by June 2007.

DVS is also in the process of awaiting final official paperwork on the transfer of property at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant from the DoD to the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of a state veterans cemetery in Dublin, Virginia.

DVS has submitted a Request for Proposal to seek consultants to provide a statewide Veteran Long Term Care Feasibility Study to assist the Department's understanding of the market potential for Long Term Care Facilities for Virginia's veterans population. Only one bid has been received; however, because of the high bid, the DVS may consider other alternatives.

Dr. Gross stated that the VA database should provide all demographic information on veterans. Chairman Dudley suggested that the Health Planning data base also be reviewed to provide demographic information on veterans.

### **Executive Order 19 Status Update**

Anne Atkins, DVS Director of Communications, further elaborated on the three initiatives in support of EO 19:

#### **Internet Portal:**

A Turbo-Tax- Type (Turbo-Vet) software application will assist veterans and benefit service representatives in preparing and submitting claims to the Veterans Administration. It will also help veterans identify their needs and locate resources that will address those needs. This type of software application will also positively impact the VA by improving the accuracy of applications and ensuring supporting information is presented in a clear and consistent manner.

Partnering Agencies: DVS; Virginia Information Technologies Agency; Virginia Commonwealth University

#### **Workforce Development**

Workforce development helps ensure that veterans have access to meaningful employment, encouraging public and private sector employers to hire veterans, assisting veterans in finding employment, assisting veterans in exploring career changes and obtaining additional education and training. An important component of workforce development includes addressing the needs of veterans with disabilities.

Partnering Agencies: DVS; Virginia Employment Commission; Department of Rehabilitation Services; Department of Military Affairs; Virginia Community Colleges; Department of Business Assistance; Department of Minority Business Enterprises, U. S. Department of Labor; U. S. Military,

#### **Outreach**

Develops effective tools for communicating with the 650,000 veterans not currently served by DVS

Research using forums, surveys, and focus groups to identify demographics, needs, perceptions and other characteristics of Virginia's veterans and their families

Develop a veterans center by VCU

Raise awareness about veterans' issues in state agencies that deliver services

Identifies and solidifies working relationships with other state agencies that focus on serving veterans

Discussion ensued regarding EO 19. Dr. Gross stressed that he would like to see more done in regards to veterans preference in contracting with state agencies.

### **Veterans Services Fund Quarterly Update & Revised Policies and Procedures**

Armistead Ransone, DVS Director of Finance and Administration, reported that the Veterans Services Fund balance for unobligated funds as of October 31, 2006 was \$235,073.26.

Per the July 26, 2006 VSF meeting, the following changes were made:

1. Donation Receipt Form – the phrase “All Donations are Tax Deductible” was added;
2. Request for Expenditures of the VVCC Resident Benefit Funds – Expenditures are paid by check, rather than by credit card

Discussion took place regarding the VVCC Residents’ Assistance Fund Policy and Cemeteries Donation Fund procedures for receiving and administering funds. Frederic Leigh stated that the policy as written is not clear regarding “what” is to be reconciled and “who” will be reconciling. He asked that the wording on Page 2, last paragraph be clarified as such. (i.e. “The in-house (**specify in-house**) will be reconciled monthly ...).

Ray Smoot made a motion that the policies be approved with the noted change. John Hanson seconded the motion.

Further discussion ensued. Dr. Gross questioned the process and asked how the Foundation shifted its legislative responsibility to the agency in disbursing funds to the care center and cemeteries. Don Ferguson explained that the Veterans Services Foundation will authorize individual local entities to make expenditures, however, any expenditures made must be reported to the Foundation. He further explained that the Veterans Services Foundation was created to administer the funds in the Veterans Services Fund. This was due to the possible mishandling of funds (receiving/administering) before the Care Center became a state-owned facility.

Frederick Leigh stated that the locals should be able to use/disburse funds as appropriate; however, he questioned the Foundation’s responsibility over the entire process. He stated that the policy as written did not clarify the term “in-house” or who reconciles the fund. He also stated that the policy did not specify procedures as to how the Veterans Services Foundation provided oversight for the Fund.

Discussion continued regarding the process. After which, Ray Smoot withdrew his original motion. Dr. Gross seconded.

Further discussion ensued regarding the policies. Bert Boyd asked if there was anything that would occur during the holiday season that needed to be approved, since there were questions regarding the policy. John Hanson made a motion that the Commissioner of DVS be authorized

to approve expenditures of designated funds up to \$20,000 for Christmas. Dr. Gross seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Commissioner Burgess stated that the policies would be redrafted for clarity and submitted to the Foundation for approval.

## **New Business**

### **VSF Needs Assessment Results**

Chairperson Dudley facilitated the VSF Needs Assessment Results presentation.

Comments were as follows:

- Request appropriations from the General Assembly for specific VSF needs (care centers; cemeteries)
- Solicit involvement and support from the Board of Veterans Services and the Joint Leadership Council
- Consider whether the VSF should identify needs and mobilize or if it would be more appropriate for DVS to identify needs and bring to the VSF for support
- Executive Order 19 will be a driver in identifying needs of veterans
- Use this year to market the Foundation to legislators and others
- Who are the VSF constituents?

After elaborate discussions, Chairperson Dudley asked that each member think of one-two projects that they would like the Foundation to undertake for discussion at the next Foundation meeting.

### **Public Comment Period**

Roger Sullivan, Virginia Veterans Coalition, voiced his concerns regarding the Foundation's existence. He stated that the purpose for which the Foundation was formed (raising monies for veterans) was not being served, and if the Foundation did not know the needs of veterans, it should "shut down." He stressed that most veterans would not understand not what the Foundation is doing.

Chairperson Dudley stated that she applauded and respected what Mr. Sullivan and the Veterans Coalition does for veterans. However, she stated that members of the Foundation were appointed by the Governor and are not politicians who campaigned for membership. She stressed that Foundation members struggle with the same issues as raised by Mr. Sullivan, but that the VSF will continue to try to find answers and solutions

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Smoot made a motion and Mr. Leigh seconded that the meeting be adjourned. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.